



**Local 1664**  
Montgomery County  
Career Fire Fighters



**Local 500**

**MCAASP**  
Montgomery County  
Association of Administrative  
and Supervisory Personnel

TO: Members of the Montgomery County Council  
RE: **Emergency Medical Services Transport Fee**

October 21, 2008

We are writing to convey our collective support for passage of the proposed EMS Transport Fee, and urge each of you to do so as well. By now you know the fundamental arguments in favor of the fee:

- It will raise \$14+ million in much needed additional revenue for the county
- Most of our neighboring jurisdictions already have EMS Transport Fees in place
- No resident of Montgomery County will pay the fee
- There is absolutely no evidence in any jurisdiction that such fees discourage 911 calls

The recent report that somebody told the Kensington Town Council that he had a colleague who told him that he once drove to a hospital rather than pay an EMT fee in the District of Columbia, hardly constitutes evidence of anything. We certainly hope the Council does not make important policy decisions based on such secondhand, anecdotal stories.

We have also heard the argument that we should not charge this fee in order to be “Good Samaritans” to visitors from outside the county. Unfortunately the same high-mindedness doesn’t apply to Montgomery County residents visiting in Frederick, Prince George’s, Carroll, Charles, Arlington or Washington counties or the cities of Alexandria, Baltimore or the District of Columbia – all of who charge EMT fees.

However, as the representatives of more than 30,000+ public employees in Montgomery County, let us add one additional rationale to the long list of legitimate reasons for supporting the EMS fee. We are all acutely aware of the current economic turmoil and looming county budget deficits. Already, politicians across the county are calling for re-negotiation of our collective bargaining contracts.

Breaking contracts needs to be a last resort, not a first resort. We have been there before, and seen the county break contracts in order to continue business as usual. Simply put – before anyone calls for breaking contracts, the county government must do everything it can to balance its budget through increasing revenues and program savings.

The county must do everything it can to balance its budget through increasing revenues and program savings. Cutbacks are already being considered as well as furloughs for public safety employees. Absent the revenues generated through the EMT the County may face an inability to maintain essential services in education, police, fire and transportation.

Furthermore, any argument for examining present negotiated agreements becomes significantly less compelling if the Council doesn’t feel the budget situation is sufficiently dire to approve an EMT fee like most of our neighboring counties.

Sincerely,

Gine Renne, *President, UFCW Local 1994, MCGEO*  
John Sparks, *President, IAFF Local 1664*  
Merle Cuttitta, *President, SEIU Local 500*

Marc Zifcak, *President, FOP Lodge 35*  
Bonnie Cullison, *President, MCEA*  
Rebecca Newman, *President, MCAASP*